

Canaan

By Lydia Weinberger

Lydia Weinberger is a senior double-majoring in Political Science and Studio Art with a minor in Creative Writing. Weinberger recently finished her first manuscript, entitled Mashiach Mashiach, for her senior honors thesis. While Canaan is not among her most current collection, it embodies the poet's introspective nature and the conflict an individual faces when reckoning with their people's painful past.

In Budapest, bronze shoes
sit on the river, where Hungarian
soldiers marched us from the ghetto
and bound our arms with our own shoelaces,
had children stand in front of parents
to save bullets, let the velocity
push them into the Danube—
we find a store with my last name
blazoned across it and I can't shake off
the feeling that if I touch the water I might
be greeting kin—
it is stuck in my throat
bitter and hard like shards of bone and
you want to dredge the river,
give the bodies a proper burial—
did you know my father's DNA
test tells him nothing other than
how thoroughly no country wants to own him.
As though a country can claim a people
they have slaughtered by the millions—
as though cycles of abuse only perpetuate
on a personal level. We are convinced
growth only comes at the expense of others,
like we learned from the Spanish,
the German, like we are starting
to teach in the Holy Land.

we opened the door so they would know
we were not drinking their child's blood,
made our broth clear, why shouldn't we be
allowed to turn around the scrutiny?
Burn down the house of the debtor and the debt
is forgiven--learned that from the English?
How do I claim a house that's burning?
It was supposed to be a homeland
but it is laced with repetition, with more corpses
in rivers with more war and war and war.
Have you ever stood on the shore
of a river, and felt only loss,
like all that will ever swell on your tongue is grief?
Was it the Danube? Was it the Jordan?
we have seen death so often
aren't surprised when
We look at our reflection in the water
and it is there too.
This is a country, not a graveyard,
Remember

